

AGENDA ITEM #15

May 10, 2002

To: Delta Protection Commission

From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director

Subject: Consideration of a Delta License Plate

Background:

The original legislation tasked the Commission with developing ideas for a long-term funding source for funding of the Commission. In 1993, the Commission adopted a position of support for a Delta license plate. There was no legislative interest in carrying legislation to authorize a Delta license plate.

Current Funding Issues:

The Delta Protection Commission has never received General Funds, and has always been funded from special funds, currently from the Environmental License Plate Fund, funded by sale of environmental license plates, and from the Harbors and Watercraft Fund, funded by taxes on recreational boat gas taxes.

The Commission would like to obtain additional funds to better carry out its mission to plan and oversee land use issues in the Delta Primary Zone. For example, the Commission requested funding for a fourth staff position and was informed that position could not be funded from the General Fund due to fiscal shortfalls.

Recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee

The Budget and Finance Committee asked staff to prepare material about the license plate program for consideration by the Commission. If the Commission chooses to support the idea of a Delta license plate, Delta legislators could be approached about carrying legislation next legislative term.

Funds could be used for staff and for special studies, such as the agricultural study or the Delta Recreation Master Plan. The funds could be used for other projects or programs if authorized by the Legislature, e.g. acquisition of agricultural easements, or wildlife-friendly agriculture programs.

How the Program Works:

The steps are: pursue the idea; obtain support of one or more legislators to carry legislation; if passed, design the plate, sell 7,500 "pre-orders" within one year. The first year funds are largely tapped by Department of Motor Vehicles to cover costs of setting up the program. The new funds would start with renewal of license plates. Information about the existing plates is attached.

Pros: Entirely new source of funds.

Would generate other marketable merchandise that would also generate income.
Could appeal to all groups--residents, users, visitors, in all fields--agriculture, recreation, wildlife habitat, etc.

Cons: Long timeline for revenue generation.

Need assistance to "sell" the first 7,500 license plates.